



“50 YEARS OF PRESERVING LOCAL HISTORY”

The Courier

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President's Corner

by Jack Prior

Where have you been this summer? I missed you! Did you forget to send in your annual appeal? Maybe it's in the mail or in with all your other bills that you just forgot to send. Please, please, please do so now so I can stop wondering where it is! Gee, if that's not the case pull out your checkbook now so you can write a check made out to me – ok, not really, but to the 'Manchester Historical Society' annual appeal. Add as many zeroes as you can. Like, trillions of them! Well, at least one more zero... That would make me very happy. Do you want to know what would also make me really happy? Passing your legacy to the Historical Society by bequeathing to us. Wow, if you do that, you would make my day for years to come, and all the other children's days to come too! If preserving and sharing Manchester's history for future generations sounds like something you'd like to do can you let me know? Of course, we love surprises too; however, if we know in advance we can get working on your wishes sooner.

All teasing aside, we cannot be a Society without your generous donations above and beyond your membership. We need to preserve our legacy and tell our story to future generations. How will people know who you are and what our community is all about? How will people know what we saw before it's gone, or, better yet, how do we preserve it for them? Without your donations we cannot show people our proud heritage.

I'll wait while you prepare the check and send it. Go now, but don't take too long. I want to tell you other important things....

Ok, the check is in the mail, right? Good, then let me tell you about some things that have happened since we last talked. Working with the Board of Directors and other individuals, we are putting together our goals and

continued on Page 3

Woodbridge Barn Grand Opening

Please join us for a grand opening of the newly restored barn, which is one of the few remaining 1700's barns in the area. It was built when Connecticut was still a colony of England and which George Washington passed by on his several trips along Middle Turnpike.

The Woodbridge Farmstead is a hidden oasis in the Manchester Green section of town. Bigelow Brook runs through the property, and there are gardens, abandoned foundations and a magnificent Black Walnut tree (one of the largest in Connecticut). On display are antique farm tools and equipment used on the Woodbridge Farm (originally 250 acres in size) and other Manchester farms. In its later years this was a dairy farm, but over the years hay, potatoes, apples and other fruits were grown.

This special Open House event will be on Sunday, October 22 between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Parking will be available at the Senior Center.





Drop Us A Line...

You can contact Society President
Jack Prior at
president@manchesterhistory.org,
or our Executive Director
Eileen Sweeney at
executivedirector@manchesterhistory.org

The Courier

*A newsletter of the
Manchester Historical Society*

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We encourage our members to support the
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We Will Miss

Dorothy Tomlinson was a long-time and valued volunteer. Before she came to us, Dorothy worked for many years in the financial sector with Travelers Insurance Co. and Sovereign Bank. She also worked at Oak Hill School for the Blind in Hartford. Dorothy volunteered for several organizations in addition to our society, including the Bloomfield United Methodist Church. She loved volunteering with us, especially for our special events. She had many friends here who miss her gracious demeanor and impeccable manner. Dorothy was truly a beautiful person.



Russell Cheney Painting Returned From France

A few months ago we were informed that several paintings by Manchester's foremost Impressionist, Russell Cheney, were available for purchase. The paintings had been in France for many years in the possession of Cheney family descendants. Their owner had recently passed away and the heirs offered them to us.

Among the paintings was one depicting our Cheney Homestead. It is not yet known when it was painted or when it found its way across the Atlantic. In any case, when we saw an electronic image of the painting we were immediately impressed and the board of directors decided that we should try to obtain it.



We made an offer and it was accepted. The painting arrived a few weeks ago and it is now on display at the History Center.

Dancing With the Celebrities

This year we tried a new fund raising event and it turned out to be a smashing success!

Cheney Hall was the venue for our version of Dancing With The Stars as ten local celebrity dancers, each with their professional dance partners had a great deal of fun performing in front of the audience, which also got into the swing of the moment.

In preparation for the event, instructors from Arthur Murray Dance Studios provided instruction over several days for the celebrities to hone their dancing skills, which were already considerable.

Because of the enthusiasm and participation of the celebs and audience, we expect to stage this event again next year.

To Our Readers

If there is something you would like us to write about, please contact Dave at 860-647-9742 or at info@manchesterhistory.org.

With a Grain of Salt

by Bob Kanehl

We have all had adults who inspired us to love history. In my case it was my father and Miss France my 5th grade teacher at Green School. These adults generally captured us with oral stories such as “George Washington walked down that road.” The biggest problem with relying on oral history is it changes with each telling or it gets lost. What is even worse is Hollywood gets involved.

My father’s story of his family stands out. He was born to very old parents, with siblings in or near their 20’s. Growing up all my father’s cousins or siblings were old enough to be his parents.

When I became interested in my family history, I was told that his father and one brother came over in 1900 from Germany. That brother was a painter, and his father was a builder. When I asked about my second cousins who happened to be about my age, I was told their father had died young. But this was not the same uncle who was a painter, because that uncle was still alive. The story of his family ended there, except for a list of relatives who appeared to come out of nowhere.

When I did my own research I discovered that my grandfather was one of four brothers who had come over in 1900 from Germany. This fact became reality when I found not just the one gravestone in East Cemetery with Kanehl on it, but several others. My father either did not know about these relatives, or had forgotten. According to the gravestones, these uncles had died while he was a baby or a toddler, this led to his lack of knowledge. My grandparents were also quiet people. These “other relatives” lives were lost to our family history.

I’m not a historian who lives his life researching; instead I’m a historian who loves to make connections. I like it when I can see the circle coming round connecting different people or events. This is what With A Grain of Salt is about. I’m looking for your insights, stories and experiences that will fill in the connections to Manchester History.

As part of this column will be some of your responses, but more importantly please contact the Manchester Historical Society to help us preserve your stories and facts. You can reach us via email at info@manchesterhistory.org or by writing to us at 175 Pine St.



President's Corner

continued from Page 1

objectives for the 2017/18 fiscal year. Ideas are flowing and the energy level is high! This year, you are going to see an increase in the number and diversity of events. Once the plan is firmed up we will reach out to you as members to support the events and volunteer at one or two of them.

For the past several months, the Woodbridge Barn has been open to the public on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. We have been fortunate, with very cooperative weather during each opening. The response has been great! We continue to move more items to the barn – items actually used by the Woodbridge’s during their daily farming. People are loving the restoration work we did and they are learning more about the Woodbridge Barn and the surrounding Manchester Green area, as well as different aspects of the Society.

Have a few hours, or more, on your hands? There is plenty of work to be done at the Society and we could use your helping hands! All skills, talents, and proclivities are welcomed! From general office work to painting, repairs and landscaping, to being a docent, just to name a few of the ways you can get involved. We will be putting together a list of which you can check periodically to see where your talents can be utilized. Don’t be shy! We need you! There are plenty of tasks to go around!

Now, one last thing. I would like to thank all the volunteers and board members – past, present, and future – for their insight, guidance, and contributions to the Society. I would also like to put out a special thank you to Dennis Gleeson for his immense dedication. Dennis will be retiring from the Board in October. Dennis has served as Chairperson of the finance ial committee, President of the board, and overall handyman. We cannot thank him enough for his tireless efforts to maintain all our properties, and for taking care of all the little things that crop up day-to-day. Dennis has donated to the Society in both time and money – adding up to thousands of dollars and hours. Even though Dennis is stepping down from the Board, he will continue to lead the school tours in the spring as well as being involved with the genealogy group.

In closing, as the board finalizes our plans for 2017-2018 season, I encourage you to reach out to us with your talents and continue supporting the Manchester Historical Society. I am also looking forward to seeing you at our members' meeting to be held in April. As always you can always reach out to us either via email or phone the History Center.

***Your actions today are tomorrow's history.
Get involved today to preserve the past.***

Cheney Homestead News

Pete Millett, Homestead chair

The Homestead has been picturesque this summer surrounded by the green, lush grounds, and the new “History Garden” has been over-flowing its bounds. We have harvested summer squash, zucchini, carrots, peppers, watermelons, cantaloupe, tomatoes, cucumbers, collard greens, okra, sorghum, corn (sweet, flour & popping), many varieties of beans (Native American, wax, black-eyed peas), pumpkins and 10’ tall sunflowers! The plants represent Native American “three sisters”, African origin and early American gardens. Also, our events this Spring and Summer have focused on gardening, starting an herb garden along the curved stone wall, demonstrating weaving at each event, and highlighting the lives of Electa Cheney, Ednah Dow Cheney, Marjory & Dorothy Cheney in the July event “Strong Women of Purpose: Three generations at the Cheney Homestead”.

We have partnered with members of the community to broaden and deepen our events. The Manchester community gardener Bettylou Sandy has provided us garden advice and tools this season and has participated in three events, giving garden instruction to guests. Weavers from the Hartford Artisan Weaving Center and the CT Weaving Guild have committed to demonstrations of weaving at each event this year, with a permanent loom setup in the Homestead for that purpose. We are talking with a couple of local costumed/historical interpreters who are considering participating in some of our fall events. And finally, we have agreed to have a special open house on Saturday 9/16 to welcome up to 150 parents and young children from Manchester who



are associated with the educational organization “Building Healthy Families”. We are planning on giving tours, making scarecrows and cornhusk dolls, and providing hay wagon rides.

Looking forward to the Fall, we have the following events planned, and all members are encouraged to share in the fun!

Sunday 9/10 “Back to School - 1751” at the Keeney Schoolhouse. First day of class in one of Manchester’s first schools.

Saturday 9/16 Special open house for “Building Healthy Families” - scarecrows, cornhusk dolls and wagon rides.

Sunday 10/08 “Homestead Harvest” event - open fire cooking with our garden bounty, campfire popcorn, stories and hopefully an old time music group and more wagon rides.

Sunday 11/12 Native American theme being prepared to honor “National American Indian Heritage Month”.

Sunday 12/10 “Homestead for the Holidays” event to celebrate a great year completed!



Meet Intern James Guillette

James has been interning with us for two summers, beginning last year. In May of this year he graduated from UMASS in Amherst where he majored in History with a minor in Classical Languages.

Growing up in Manchester James attended St. Bridget School, Bowers Elementary School, Two Rivers Middle School, and University High School of Science and Engineering in Hartford. It was there that he decided he wanted to further his education in the field of history. He plans to attend graduate school, and wants to get his Master’s Degree in Public History. Perhaps his interest in history was sparked in part because of some distant ancestors including Henry David Thoreau and the actor William Gillette.

One of his main interests is in the earliest contacts of Europeans with North America. Five hundred years before Columbus, Vikings landed in North America in Labrador and New Foundland in Canada. One of their sites, known as L’Anse Aux Meadows in New Foundland, now has a museum of these early settlers. James’ hope is to be able to work there and study the culture. He has already learned basic Old Norse language while at UMASS.

James chose to intern at Manchester Historical Society in part because he is drawn to unpublished history. Our society has (as do many local historical societies) much in the way of archives and artifacts that are not available anywhere else. Original documents and photographs are often not available online. But they are available to researchers who make the time and effort to find them by visiting a history museum.

During the past two summers, James has helped us with research on several subjects, including the many ice cream shops that have existed in town, the Landfear family from the Manchester Green area which made and repaired pump organs and tuned pianos, and assisting Sandy Ostrinsky in organizing and cataloging a large collection of piano rolls for our player piano. He has learned to keep an open mind when it comes to working in a museum. Because of the variety of tasks there is not often a dull moment.

Calendar of Events

- ▶ **The Old Manchester Museum** at 126 Cedar Street, open by appointment -- phone 860-647-9983. The research facility is available all year round -- to make an appointment, please phone 860-647-9742.
- ▶ **The History Center and museum store** are generally open weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. You can purchase local-history items such as books on local history, copies of vintage maps, Kage company plastic decorations, Manchester Herald cookbooks, t-shirts with historic scenes of Manchester, copies of high school yearbooks, vintage business directories, mugs, notecards, and limited-edition ceramic tree ornaments with images of Cheney Homestead and other landmarks. There is also a study area where visitors can conduct research by browsing through old Manchester directories, surveys, high school yearbooks, and booklets. There's an exhibit of the Russell barber shop, with barber pole, and vintage barbering tools and furniture, as well as a standing exhibit about Cheney silks. Please check to make sure the building is open before coming! 860-647-9983.
- ▶ **Cheney Homestead** at 106 Hartford Rd. is open the second Sunday each month from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
- ▶ **Woodbridge Farmstead** at 495 East Middle Tpke. The restored barn and grounds are open the second and fourth Sunday of the month, May through October from 11:00 to 1:00 p.m. Parking available on street and in the Senior Center parking lot.

Sunday, September 17, Dancing with the Celebrities, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. at Cheney Hall, 177 Hartford Road. Featuring local celebrities, presenting a special dance with their partners. Instructors courtesy of Arthur Murray Dance Centers of Vernon, Connecticut. Special guest and Mistress of Cermonies, Barbara Cheney, who is an award-winning ballroom dancer. Wine, beer, soda, and water will be available for purchase. Come enjoy the fun and festivity. Teacup auction with wonderful local items to bid on. Plus, buy \$1 tickets to vote for your favorite dancer! Admission \$15 for ages 13 to adult, and \$5 for ages 12 and under.

Sunday, September 24 Open House at the Woodbridge barn and grounds.

POSTPONED -- the Hilliard Mills walk and tour will take place in the spring: Meet at 642 Hilliard Street for a walking tour and commentary about the historic buildings in the Hilliardville section of Manchester, including the country's oldest woolen mill.

Saturday, October 7, the 41st **Annual Walking Tour** of the Cheney Historic District with commentary by Dr. Chris Paulin of Manchester Community College, 1:00 p.m. Popular history walk starting at Fuss & O'Neill, 146 Hartford Road (plenty of parking in their lot west of the building). Find out about those huge brick buildings that remain from the days of the world-famous silk mills. Who worked there? Who owned the mills? Where did workers and owners live? This event is co-sponsored by Manchester Community College and the Manchester Historical Society. We'll see Cheney Hall, the former silk mills, the location of the defunct South Manchester Railroad, the Loom exhibit at the former Cheney machine shop, neighborhoods of worker housing, and Washington School. The walk takes about two hours with a distance of a mile or so. No rain date, so bring umbrellas if weather is iffy. Extreme weather cancels. The walk is free, but donations to the Manchester Historical Society are welcome.

Sunday, October 8 Open House at the Cheney Homestead, featuring a New England harvest.

Sunday, October 8 Open House at the Woodbridge barn and grounds

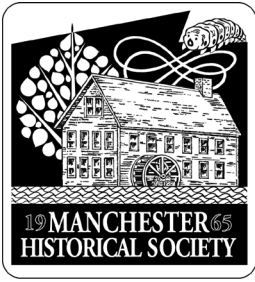
Sunday, October 22 Open House at the Woodbridge barn and grounds - *see related article on page 1*

Sunday, November 12 Open House at the Cheney Homestead, featuring Native Americans.

Friday, December 1, Holiday Gala at the Adams Mill Restaurant, 165 Adams St, Manchester, starting at 5:30 p.m. More information and an invitation soon. Save the date!

Saturday, December 2 from 11:00 to 3:00 p.m., Open House: throughout the historic district -- all are invited to visit the Cheney Homestead at 106 Hartford Road -- decorated for the holidays by the Manchester Garden Club -- the Manchester History Center at 175 Pine Street, the Old Manchester Museum at 126 Cedar Street, and the historic barn at the Woodbridge property, 495 Middle Turnpike East. The museum stores at the History Center and Old Manchester Museum will be open, with books on local history, copies of vintage maps, t-shirts with historic scenes of Manchester, mugs, notecards, and limited-edition ceramic tree ornaments with our historic properties. The open houses are free -- donations accepted. Take a self-guided walking tour between the South Manchester properties using the Historic District map on our website.

April 2018 Business meeting of the Society. Date to be determined.



The Manchester Historical Society
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Individual (65+)	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Couple	\$40	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Family	\$100
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